

FOREVER YOUNG

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FADE IN:

EXT. ZOO BENCH - DAY

Some wilting flowers in a planter are shown near ELLIE, an eccentric seven year old with purple glasses, and her mother CHARLOTTE, a tall ginger dressed in sloppy business-casual, as they sit on a bench outside of the zoo gift shop.

Ellie pulls a bracelet with a spider gem out of a plastic bag and admires it while her mom is on the phone.

ELLIE	CHARLOTTE
Mommy, how did they get this	(on the phone)
spider inside the bracelet?	We need to get it on the
	market as soon as possible -
	one sec lovebug I'm sorry.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
How did it die? Do you think it got
run over?

Ellie continues to look at the bracelet while Charlotte has a heated phone call.

CHARLOTTE
(on the phone)
We just can't handle it financially
anymore.

EXT. ZOO EXHIBITS - DAY

Ellie, licking an ice-cream cone, and Charlotte, still on the phone, walk around the zoo looking at the animals.

CHARLOTTE
(on the phone in the
background)
The insurance is barely keeping us
afloat and we still need a new car.

ELLIE
Can we go see Bobo now?

Charlotte nods yes, still on the phone.

A young family of three walks by as Ellie looks at them longingly before excitedly approaching the primates exhibit. A young ZOOKEEPER speaks in front of the exhibit as a small crowd gathers.

ZOOKEEPER

Our zoo family changes every day,
just like all families around the
world and in the wild. It is
sometimes hard for us to say
goodbye to our furry friends, but
Bobo lived a good, long life of 34
years at our zoo. That's about an
average life time for a big
orangutan like him. He was an old
man and it was his just his time.

Charlotte turns pale when she hears the Zookeeper.

CHARLOTTE

I'm going to have to call you back.

ELLIE

Mommy where is Bobo?

CHARLOTTE

Uh- well it sounds like Bobo was a
very old monkey. Remember when I
told you I remember coming to see
him when I was little like you?
Sometimes when animals get really
old and tired, one day they justt..
Don't wake up.

ELLIE

(distraught and confused)
But he wasn't old the lady said he
was 34. Dad wasn't even that old.
Did someone kill him?

CHARLOTTE

No no sweetie no one killed him.

ELLIE

Can he still see his family?

CHARLOTTE

No, he's not here with us anymore.

ELLIE

(on the verge of tears)
But then where did he go?

CHARLOTTE

Honey. We all have to die one day
no matter if we get in an accident
or not. That's just life.

CU of Ellie's shocked face before zooming out from above to show an aerial shot of her, making her seem very small.

INT. ZOO BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Ellie dry heaves over the toilet while concerned Charlotte holds her hair back and tries to comfort her.

ELLIE
(through tears and frantic
breaths)
I- don't-get-it.

CHARLOTTE
I know sweetie its hard to
understand right now.

ELLIE
When- I'm - dead - will - I- still -
be - able- to - see - you? What-
happens-to- my- eyes?

Charlotte sighs and rubs Ellie's back as she throws up in the toilet.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Will- I- have- a- phone- to- talk
to- you?

CHARLOTTE
No, honey we don't get to take our
phones with us when we die.

Ellie starts crying even harder.

INT. ZOO BATHROOM - DAY

A long line has formed in the bathroom outside the stalls. Concerned MOTHERS silently stand waiting with their confused CHILDREN. One mother covers her young daughter's ears. Ellie's CRIES echo in the background.

INT. ZOO BATHROOM STALL - DAY

ELLIE
(still crying)
Sister Janis said there is a God
and He is supposed to protect us. I
hate Him for letting all this
happen to us!

CHARLOTTE
Well your teacher is a very serious
woman who believes-

ELLIE
I HATE GOD I HATE GOD I HATE GOD

INT. ZOO BATHROOM - DAY

The people in the line outside look appalled and some leave the bathroom. We hear Ellie's shouts and Charlotte trying to calm her.

CHARLOTTE
Shhhhh its okay Ellie its okay.

EXT. OUTSIDE ZOO BATHROOM - DAY

Some birds chirp together by a completely dead pot of flowers outside of the zoo bathroom. The bathroom line has grown all the way outside and around the building.

INT. ELLIE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Puffy-eyed Ellie and her exhausted mom sit at a dimly lit table for dinner. Scattered moving boxes are seen around the room. Charlotte eats her pork chops while Ellie sits at the other end of the table with crossed arms.

ELLIE
I can't believe you, Mom.

CHARLOTTE
Ellie, you have to eat something.

ELLIE
I'm not eating this. What if
someone ate you for dinner after
you died?

CHARLOTTE
Ellie, sweetie, pork chops are one
of your favorite things we've eaten
them a thousand times.

ELLIE
Well, I'm not eating them anymore.
Twinkie can have mine. Why do we
have to eat anyway?

CHARLOTTE

Remember what Dad always said, if
you wanna be big and stro-

ELLIE

(interrupting Charlotte)

Are you gonna put me in a ugly pot
when I die too?

Charlotte stops eating for the first time and puts her head
in her hands.

CHARLOTTE

Its called an urn, Ellie.

Ellie and Charlotte sit there for a minute in silence. Ellie
notices her mom is distraught and picks up her fork to take a
bite of the vegetables on her plate. They eat together in
silence.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Charlotte waters her plants and cleans the dishes. Ellie puts
food in the cat bowl on the ground. A bright yellow cat walks
up to her.

ELLIE

There ya go Twinkie.

Ellie strokes the cat solemnly as the cat purrs and falls
asleep in her lap. She looks at the spider bracelet on her
hand and takes it off, abruptly shoving it in her pocket.

I/E. CHARLOTTE'S CAR - DAY

Charlotte and Ellie drive through the carpool line at Ellie's
Catholic elementary school. They get honked at by a car
trying to cut in the line.

CHARLOTTE

You'd think at a school as Jesus-y
as this one they'd have a more
peaceful carpool.

Ellie looks longingly out the window at a dad saying goodbye
to his son, OLIVER, a soft spoken seven-year-old with dark
curly hair wearing a graphic tee.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Okay well, have a great day lovebug
I'll see you later tonight.
Remember Kate is gonna pick you up
I have to meet with some people
about the house.

ELLIE

Why do I even have to go?

CHARLOTTE

Well we gotta give that big ole
brain of yours *some*thin' to do
right?

Ellie stares out the window, unresponsive.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

And you gotta really try Ellie
okay? like we talked about. You
can't keep your classmates from
knowing how awesome you are. That's
just not fair.

The car alarm starts to go off.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

God damnit this piece of trash
rental could not be any shittier.

Charlotte messes around with the buttons on the keys and in
the car trying to stop the alarm. Ellie stares out the window
unfazed. A teacher/NUN opens the car door for Ellie to get
out of.

NUN

(shouting over the alarm)
Oh my we've got a noisy one here!

Charlotte finally gets the alarm to stop.

CHARLOTTE

Jesus Christ finally.

The Nun looks shocked at Charlotte's use of the Lord's name.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Sorry about all that. Well... have
a great day Ellie pie okay?

She kisses Ellie on the forehead.

NUN
C'mon my little child of God lets
get you inside.

The Nun glares at Charlotte as she ushers Ellie out of the car.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL - DAY

Ellie starts to walk towards the school. She looks back at her mom who waves from the car. Ellie waves back and walks inside with the other kids.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Ellie sits drearily in her brightly colored classroom with a party hat on as SISTER JANIS, a forty ish year old nun, passes out birthday cupcakes. The rest of the class (besides Ellie) sings "Happy Birthday."

Ellie stares at the frosted cupcake in front of her as her classmates devour their own while laughing and talking.

SISTER JANIS
Ope look at that. I've made a mess!

Sister Janis, her hands smeared with pink icing, goes into the bathroom to wash her hands. Ellie stands up on her chair, party hat on.

ELLIE
(loudly)
Do you guys know that Bobo from the
zoo died?

The classroom slowly goes silent for a moment.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
You know you can't see your Mom
anymore when you're dead? You can't
even FaceTime her!

Concerned Sister Janis emerges quickly from the bathroom as Ellie is mid sentence. We see Oliver look up curiously from his cupcake at Ellie. Eventually, some of the kids start laughing.

CLASSMATE
I'm going to Heaven and then I'll
see Jesus and my hamster,
Strawberry.

After a moment Sister Janis gathers herself and intervenes.

SISTER JANIS

Okayyyy that's enough of that for
today kids. Ellie let's get down
off that chair. I think its about
time for recess lets go outside
children!

Oliver stays seated for a moment still looking at Ellie who
is now seated as well. The other kids get up from their
chairs to go to recess. We see Sister Janis talking on the
phone at her desk with a concerned look.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Ellie walks towards the swing set. She sees a singular flower
growing in the sidewalk on the way and plucks it up. She then
solemnly swings on the swing set. The other classmates SCREAM
and run around on the playground contently. Ellie looks down
at the single flower in her hand.

Oliver walks up to Ellie with a decorated shoe box.

ELLIE

I like your box.

OLIVER

Wanna see who its for?

Ellie shrugs and nods. Oliver starts walking away and Ellie
follows him.

Oliver and Ellie stand in front of a tall tree on the edge of
the playground.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

The box is for my bird friend. She
died.

ELLIE

Oh, my dad is in one of those but
his is so ugly. My mom said its
called a "yurn."

OLIVER

Your dad is in a box?

ELLIE

A yurn box.

OLIVER

That's kinda cool.

ELLIE

I guess. Our car is all crushed up now too. We have a new one though that my mom gets really mad at.

OLIVER

Well my bird wasn't crushed. I think one day she just saw that her babies are big now and that she already did everything.

Oliver pointed up at a nest in the tree filled with baby birds.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Now the babies get to go build their own nests.

ELLIE

Do you think the babies are sad?

OLIVER

Probably. But I don't think she'd want them to be. Its just what birds do I guess.

Oliver puts the box down next to the bottom of the tree. Ellie looks at the flower in her hand then places it on top of the box.

ELLIE

There.

They look up at the nest in the tree as the birds fly away. The two children look at each other and giggle.

FADE TO BLACK.

